

Forest Plan Revision



National Forest Management Act

The three National Forests in Michigan are concurrently starting the Forest Plan Revision Process for each of the National Forests.

Forest Plans outline broad goals and priorities for a National Forest. They do not prescribe site-specific actions or projects. While we believe the fundamentals of the existing Forest Plans are sound, there are areas that may need review and possible revision because:

- There are changed conditions to the land;
- We need to incorporate new scientific concepts;

- We are striving to reflect the change in people's expectations about the use of public land; and,
- There are new issues and information.

The three National Forests in Michigan are all scheduled to complete Forest Plan revisions by 2007. In an effort to create efficiencies in the process that will help us provide consistent and clear messages to our internal and external audiences, we are identifying areas of Plan Revision where resources, information needs, data assessments and public involvement can be cooperatively accomplished by all three Forests.

Public Involvement

The Michigan National Forests are committed to revising Forest Plans in collaboration with interested individuals, groups, other government agencies and Sovereign nations. We will strive to create an environment that involves all of our interested publics, as well as our own employees. We will promote opportunities for involvement at the appropriate time and in the appropriate forums. Our goal is to establish lasting relationships,

acceptance and trust of the agency, our individual Forests and our employees. Enhanced public involvement with individuals, groups, government agencies and others will help us create Plans that are practical and implementable. We all have a stake in the decisions made about the future management of our forests and we need to take this opportunity to share those views with each other.

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DATES TO NOTE:

- *Notice of Intent, September 2003*
- *Preliminary Alternatives, 2004*
- *Draft EIS & Proposed Plan, 2005*
- *Final EIS and Plan, 2007*

The Process

What is a Forest Plan? Forest Plans outline broad goals and priorities for a National Forest. You can compare these plans to city zoning, which identifies areas of a city and how they will be managed. Forest planning does the same for a National Forest, identifying which areas will be managed for wilderness, production of goods and services, research, etc.. City zoning requirements may also contain city-wide rules in a broad application, but are not specific to every house. Forest planning speaks to broad goals, not individual projects. Forest planning can be very complex, and the process is designed to be dynamic and flexible. There are several steps or “milestones” in the Planning process:

Need for Change: Prior to beginning the revision process, we review the current plan to determine what needs to be revised. This “need-for-change” analysis considers the results of past monitoring and evaluation efforts, issues raised by the public and concerns of managers, and identifies information and direction that need revision in the current forest plan.

Notice of Intent: Based on the data compiled in the need for change analysis, a preliminary description of proposed changes will be published in a Notice of Intent (NOI). This notice is published in the Federal Register and advises the public of our intent to revise the forest plan.

Draft EIS & Proposed Revised Forest Plan: Comments received during the scoping period as outlined in the NOI, help us to draft Alternatives. Each of the proposed alternatives for the plan revision are carefully evaluated and documented in a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Draft EIS and the Proposed Revised Forest Plans are made available to the public for comment prior to the final EIS and Revised Plan being signed.

Final EIS & Revised Forest Plan: The Final Revised Plan is a dynamic, scientific-based and public supported document that is the result of a multi-year process which involved the efforts of many.

